

CONGRATULATING THE NATIONAL
LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION
ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 17, 2014

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the National Low Income Housing Coalition, or "NLIHC," on its 40th Anniversary.

NLIHC is the only national advocacy organization solely focused on the housing needs of extremely low income households—that is, households with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income.

While numerous organizations concentrate on federal housing policy, NLIHC is unique because of its sole focus on the needs of extremely low income people, the only population experiencing an absolute shortage of affordable housing. NLIHC remains firm to its mission, even at times when doing so is not popular.

Since its inception, NLIHC has been a leader in the effort to address the housing needs of those with the lowest incomes. From the time that Cushing N. Dolbeare founded the Ad Hoc Low Income Housing Coalition, a predecessor to NLIHC, the organization has worked to better educate constituents about when and how to make their voices heard.

Ms. Dolbeare authored or co-authored dozens of articles, books and reports, most notably a widely-cited annual report on the gap between housing costs and the wages of low income people. This publication continues to be relied upon on Capitol Hill, and the data included in it are instrumental in making the case for continued federal support for housing programs that reach those in our society with the very lowest incomes.

NLIHC has found through its research that for every 100 extremely low income renter households, there are only 31 affordable and available units. This shortage worsens every year and exists in every state in the country. The need is particularly acute given current funding for HUD programs, which is only enough to reach one in four eligible households. Households who cannot get assistance, even though they are eligible, must spend the majority of their meager incomes on housing, leaving very little for other expenses. Often, something like a medical emergency or job loss leaves a household at risk of experiencing homelessness or another unstable housing situation.

To address the housing shortage, NLIHC's most notable achievement to date has been its work towards creating a National Housing Trust Fund in 2008. The NHTF was initially to be funded by contributions from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The contributions were temporarily suspended in 2008 at the height of the financial crisis. The Trust Fund, once it is capitalized, will provide the largest investment in over 40 years for the production, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing for extremely low income households. It would jumpstart construction in our communities—providing both jobs and sustainable housing opportunities to moderate and low-income people.

I have been eager to see the Housing Trust Fund funded, and I call on my colleagues to find additional sources of funding from outside

of the appropriations process, to capitalize it. The NHTF, funded to scale, is the most promising way for our nation to end the affordable housing shortage which exists in every state in the country, and advance on the progress we are already making as a country towards ending homelessness.

In addition, NLIHC has been a leading voice in assuring that the rights of renters and extremely low income households are protected as Congress addressed foreclosures.

With hundreds of members across the country, and consistently incisive research and policy analysis, NLIHC is a respected voice in Washington, D.C. that has helped produce policies impacting the lives of millions. I congratulate NLIHC on its 40th Anniversary, and I look forward to working with NLIHC in the future to address the housing needs of the very poorest Americans. There is a lot of work that remains to be done, but I have no doubt that with NLIHC as a partner, we are up to the task.

PRESIDENTIAL PARDON FOR JOHN
KIRIAKOU

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 17, 2014

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask for a Presidential pardon for John Kiriakou. Mr. Kiriakou is an American hero. A 15 year CIA veteran, he was decorated and recognized more than a dozen times for his outstanding work in the always-demanding intelligence world, served in dangerous Middle East posts and helped lead the team in Pakistan that captured our first high value Al Qaeda target during the biggest coordinated operation in Agency counter-terrorism history.

John Kiriakou is also a devoted family man to his wife and five children, a church-going member of the Greek-American community, a best-selling author and a serious-minded former Congressional foreign policy aide.

John Kiriakou is a whistleblower, as well. The first American intelligence officer to officially and on-record reveal that the U.S. was in the torture business as a matter of White House policy under President Bush. In confirming what the American media and policymakers were hearing whispered—that waterboarding and other enhanced interrogation techniques were a matter of standard military and intelligence procedures—he helped begin an intense and overdue debate over whether torture violated international law, tarnished our higher American principles and undermined the critical need for reliable, actionable information.

And John Kiriakou is a convicted felon, serving a 2½ year plea bargained sentence in a Pennsylvania federal prison. The charge against him is violating the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, whereby John answered a question from a U.S. reporter who was duplicitously fronting for lawyers defending Al Qaeda prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay and in the process unintentionally confirmed the classified identity of a CIA colleague. A colleague who, by the way, was being erroneously labeled as an enhanced interrogation techniques torturer.

All four of these realities about John are intertwined. He is not a spy nor a turncoat, he

did not sell secrets to an enemy or act to hurt U.S. national security. But John did shine a critical spotlight on a CIA practice that many wanted kept in the shadows and he did challenge the authority of those who authorized, oversaw, and encouraged the use of waterboarding and other acts of torture. And he did this with the moral authority of someone who served inside the intelligence world, refused an invitation to be trained in waterboarding and other like methods, knew and loved the rank-and-file men and women who sacrifice family life, safety, and prosperity for the mission of gathering and assessing secrets that might threaten American interests and lives.

The real issue here is the extremely selective prosecution of John and the ongoing efforts to intimidate him from talking about our intelligence community's misfires. Even former CIA Director Leon Panetta now concedes he accidentally revealed classified information to the writer of Zero Dark Thirty, but faces no legal ramifications. Jose Rodriguez, the CIA's former head of the Clandestine Service, admits to deciding without any legal authorization to erase videotapes of torture sessions so they could never be used in U.S. courts, but has never been forced to answer for this destruction of evidence.

Whatever John's misdeeds—and he admits that answering that reporter's questions was ill-advised and naïve—he has more than paid for them. After fifteen years of service to his country, the personal risks and costs of a life in the intelligence world, the legal double-standard applied, and now two years in prison John Kiriakou deserves a Presidential pardon so his record can be cleared, just as this country is trying to heal from a dark chapter in its history.

HONORING ALFONSO J. ORTIZ

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 17, 2014

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Alfonso J. Ortiz, a devoted husband, loving father and proud New Mexican.

Alfonso's New Mexico roots run deep—he is a direct descendant of a Conquistador during the time of Diego De Vargas who served as Spanish governor for the New Spain territory of Santa Fe de Nuevo México. Alfonso would carry on this legacy. From the beginning, Alfonso displayed an impassioned sense of duty, pride and commitment to those he loved, his community and our country. At 17 years old, Alfonso proudly enlisted in the United States Army serving with honor and distinction in World War II.

Alfonso would embark on a 30 year career as a Civil Service Employee with the United States Post Office (USPS). Starting out as a Rural Route Letter Carrier, Alfonso ascended through the ranks and at one point supervised all the mail carriers in Santa Fe. Alfonso was a man of great integrity and revered by his employees. Whenever a letter carrier passed by, they would remind his children of what a wonderful boss he was; they would do anything in the world for him because they knew he never asked of them anything he would not do himself.